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The Adventures of. . . Scholar Travels Overseas to Study Famed Cartoonist, Comic

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The Adventures of ...

Scholar travels overseas to study famed cartoonist, comic

The globe-trotting adventures of a comic book icon led one literary expert on his own international journey to solve a mystery.

Joe Sutliff Sanders, assistant professor of English at Kansas State University and a Fulbright Scholar, spent the spring 2013 semester in Luxembourg and Belgium researching Hergé, one of the world's most acclaimed cartoonists and author of "The Adventures of Tintin" series.

Hergé was the pen name of Belgian writer and artist Georges Remi. "Tintin," his best known creation, first appeared in 1929 as a series in a Belgian newspaper. It follows an investigative reporter named Tintin and his fox terrier Snowy. Sanders is considered one of the leading scholars on the "Tintin" series and Hergé.

At the Royal Library of Belgium in Brussels, Sanders furthered his research on the series and Hergé's life by studying an exclusive microfilm collection archived at the library. The collection contains Hergé's

serialized newspaper comics that were published during the 1944-1945 Nazi occupation of Belgium.

"When the Nazis took over, the newspaper in which Hergé published his comic folded rather than run what the Nazis told them to," Sanders said. "When Hergé started publishing again during the occupation, he ran 'Tintin' in a newspaper that was widely regarded as a mouthpiece for the Nazi propaganda ministry."

Although "Tintin" boosted sales for the Nazis, Hergé's beliefs didn't match with those of the Nazis, Sanders said. After the war, Hergé stated that he chose to continue publishing his comics in the Nazi newspaper because it was his occupation. However, doing so raised questions about Hergé's behavior as a citizen.

After World War II ended, Hergé revised strips that ran in the newspaper into book-length comic collections. Revisions included changes to the format, pacing, length,

color and content. Sanders was able to compare the original versions to their altered counterparts, looking at what changes Hergé made to the wartime content that was under close scrutiny by the Nazis and the public.

"Being able to look at not just the strips, but also at the editorial cartoons and commentary that ran alongside them, gave me an unprecedented opportunity for insights into how Hergé's comics borrowed from and revised the 'official' version of reality from the Nazis," Sanders said.

Sanders plans to publish his findings as well as introduce them into the classroom.

In part because of his Fulbright research, Sanders has been asked to edit a collection of new scholarship on Hergé from the University Press of Mississippi.

By Greg Tammen, Communications and Marketing

Meet the faculty members in the children's literature program

Gregory Eiselein, professor and director of K-State First, is an internationally known expert on Louisa May Alcott. With Kansas State University's Anne Phillips, he is co-editor of both "The Louisa May Alcott Encyclopedia" and the Norton Critical Edition of Alcott's "Little Women."



Carol Franko, associate professor and lead adviser, specializes in utopian and science fiction.



Philip Nel, university distinguished professor and director of the children's literature program, specializes in Dr. Seuss; the "Harry Potter" series; and Crockett Johnson — creator of the "Harold and the Purple Crayon" series. Nel has appeared in many print, radio and TV stories about children's literature. His recent book, "Crockett Johnson and Ruth Krauss: How an Unlikely Couple Found Love, Dodged the FBI, and Transformed Children's Literature," is nominated for a 2013 Will Eisner Comic Industry Award in the Best Educational/Academic Work category.



Anne Phillips, associate professor and associate head of the English department, is one the nation's foremost experts on Louisa May Alcott and studies mid-20th century literature that focuses on the American home front. With Eiselein, she co-edited "The Louisa May Alcott Encyclopedia" and the Norton Critical Edition of "Little Women."

Joe Sutliff Sanders, assistant professor, is an expert on "The Secret Garden," novels about the classic orphan girl, and comic books and graphic novels, including Hergé's "The Adventures of Tintin" series. He has published two books and many essays on these subjects. He was named a 2013 Fulbright scholar, studying an exclusive collection microfilm on Hergé's comics housed in the Royal Library of Belgium in Brussels.



Karin Westman, associate professor and head of the English department, specializes in 20th century and contemporary British literature, including the "Harry Potter" series and Philip Pullman's "His Dark Materials." She has presented and published on both series. With Naomi Wood, she co-edits "The Lion and the Unicorn," an international journal on children's literature.



Naomi Wood, professor and director of undergraduate studies, researches Victorian era literature for and about children. She is working on a book about religious influence in children's books — especially Hans Christian Andersen, C.S. Lewis and Philip Pullman. With Westman, she co-edits "The Lion and the Unicorn."